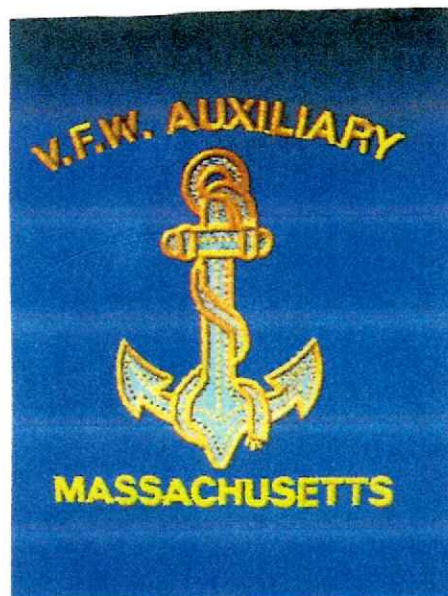


**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS**



2026-2027 PROGRAM KICKOFF



STABILITY, STRENGTH and HOPE

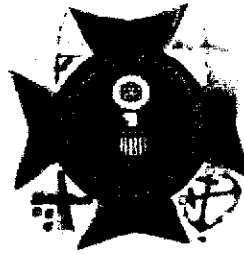
Saturday, August 8, 2026

Patricia M. Wilbur, Department President

**Melissa Pratt, PDP
Chairman**

**Susan Cacciagrani
Co-Chairman**

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS**



**WELCOME TO THE PROGRAM KICKOFF
for the 2026-2027 PROGRAM YEAR!**

**The Program Chairmen have worked hard to provide the Auxiliaries
with the information and tools you will need to be successful this year.**

**Please share this information with your members. At the end of the
year in June, 2027, when the Program Chairmen share all the good work that
you have reported in support of our veterans, families and communities,
Madam President Pat and Massachusetts will become a part of the Circle of
Excellence at National!**

**Thank you, Madam President Pat, for asking us to chair this event. We
truly hope you enjoy your 2026-2027 Program Kickoff.**

**Melissa Pratt, PDP
Chairman**

**Susan Cacciagrani
Co-Chairman**



***Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary
Department of Massachusetts***

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I offer my congratulations to al 2026-2027 officers and chairmen. Together, we shall achieve great things. The VFW Department of Massachusetts Auxiliary is a unit of sisters and brothers united in their cause dedicated to serving our veterans and their families.

Allow me to provide you with some information regarding my year as Department President of Massachusetts:

STATE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL PROJECT – *Special Olympics Massachusetts*

PIN: *Anchor with gold roping (navy blue and gold)*

SLOGAN: *Stability, Strength and Hope*

COLORS: *Navy Blue and Gold*

SHIRTS AND JACKETS: *Navy Blue with Anchor Embroidery in Gold*

Our Program Kickoff provides us with the necessary information for a successful year of achievements. Please do your best to attend any or all the programs and events. The Spaghetti Dinner and Auction (December date to be announced) is always fun and enjoyable, plus a simple way to purchase holiday gifts.

We will have guest speakers during the year provided by the various Chairmen. More information will be given soon. The Membership Chairman will offer a variety of ways to approach this vital mainstay throughout the year.

Let us work together as a team, forge a solid foundation with the VFW, and succeed for our veterans – past, present, and future.

Faithfully,

Patricia M. Wilbur
Department President
2026 - 2027

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY

Brochure Order Form

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



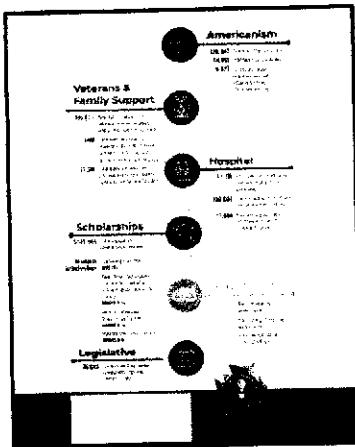
FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters is pleased to offer the following brochures to our members at no charge. **Please allow two weeks for delivery.**
Fillable/printable copies are also available in MALTA/Member Resources:
Historian & Media Relations, Membership and Scholarships.

Membership Brochure
(includes application)



Fact Sheet



Patriotic Art & 3-Dimensional Art Brochure



Please indicate the quantity requested below. Order quantity is not to exceed 50 copies of each.*
**Please contact National Headquarters should you need larger quantities for a recruiting event.*

Brochure

Quantity

Auxiliary Membership Brochure (includes application)

Auxiliary Fact Sheet

Young American Creative Patriotic Art Brochure & 3-Dimensional (2 sided)

MAIL BROCHURES TO:

First and Last Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Daytime Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Auxiliary Number _____ Member Number _____

Submit order forms to:

VFW Auxiliary, Attn: Brochure Orders, 406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111 or email to info@vfwauxiliary.org with "Brochure Order" in the subject line.

Note: VFW program brochures (including "Buddy@ Poppy", Teacher of the Year, Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy) can be ordered from the VFW Store at www.vfwstore.org or by calling 1.833.VFW.VETS.

Revised 10/24/2022

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Beth Barrett, PDP

846 Broadway, Trlr 23

Saugus, MA 01906

781-520-4020

beth.sobel@comcast.net

Congratulations to all the 2026 – 2027 Department Chairmen!

You have each been chosen to fill a very important role in the 2026-2027 Administration. Dept. President Wilbur has placed her confidence in you to promote your program, to assist all of the Auxiliaries in the Department to be successful in their program work, and to report your progress throughout the year to your National Ambassador.

You will be required to submit a minimum of 4 promotions to your National Ambassador. Send copies of your article for the Program Kick Off book, your Dept. Newsletter articles, your presentations at all COAs and Conferences, any flyers that you distribute, and a description of any events that you hold or participate in. The more information you send to your National Ambassador, the better. Make your name known to National!

You will be required to submit 2 copies of your presentation to Dept. Secretary/Treasurer Betty Rosa at each Council of Administration meeting. In addition, you should give a report to each District President at each Council of non-reporting Auxiliaries in their District so that they can follow up with them.

You will be responsible for submitting block forms to the Mid-Winter Conference Chairman and to the Auxiliary of the Year Chairman. If your program includes donations made through Department, you will also be responsible for completing Chairman Financial Reports of donation receipts sent to you from Betty.

Please copy me on everything that you submit to Department and National. If you have any questions or issues, please contact me for assistance. And remember, while encouraging each Auxiliary to **REPORT, REPORT, REPORT** to you, you must **REPORT, REPORT, REPORT** to National.

Good Luck!

Americanism/Patriotic Instructor 2026/27

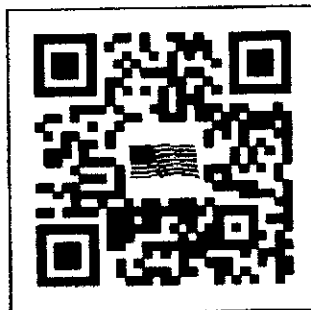
Melissa Danforth
50 Lighthouse Ln
Westport, MA 02790
macedanforth@gmail.com
(508)965-4474

"Americanism is an unfailing love of country; loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity."

Welcome to another new year! I'd like to thank President Pat Wilbur for this opportunity, and I look forward to updating Jessica Gardner, our National Ambassador, with all we're doing in Massachusetts to promote, educate, and honor.

PROMOTE

This year's program will focus on a form of promotion known as a Point-of-Purchase display or POP. "It's a marketing tool used to promote products and inspire people to act. America is our product and by incorporating symbols like the American Flag, bald eagles, the Statue of Liberty and other patriotic imagery we can use the POP Sign to promote Americanism. It can be a physical sign or a post on social media."



EDUCATE

The **Patriotic Instructor** is responsible for educating members about the history and symbolism related to the VFW Auxiliary and the American Flag. It is our job to teach the proper way to stand and salute the Flag, to display and respect the Flag, and to retire and dispose of the Flag. Understanding Auxiliary traditions, rituals, and meeting etiquette is also very important. Much of this information can be accessed through Malta, the Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual, and of course, our website and mailings.

FLAG ETIQUETTE AT PARADES

When an American Flag passes:

- Stand up.
- Remove your hat (not official cover).
- Place your right hand over your heart.
- Stop any conversation you are having.

Note: It is not necessary to salute every American Flag that passes.

- *If it is carried by an honor guard or in a group with other flags, stand up and salute (veterans) or pay respect to the Flag.*
- *Do not salute small hand-held flags carried by parade attendees and participants.*

Teach your children to respect our nation's Flag.

If they are given a small Flag, please do not throw it on the ground or in the street.

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

www.vfwauxiliary.org

HONOR

Here is a list of some of the more pertinent federal and military holidays and observances. Please check the National and Department websites and social media pages for reminders, resources, and events.

Patriot Day - September 11th

This day is to perpetuate the memory of those who perished in the attacks on America that occurred on this date in 2001. Also known as the National Day of Service and Remembrance, it recognizes the first responders and everyday heroes who risked and sacrificed their lives that day.

***POW/MIA Recognition Day - third Friday in September (18th in 2026)**

This day honors the commitments and sacrifices made by our nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. It is one of the 6 days specified by law on which the black POW/MIA flag shall be flown over all federal facilities and cemeteries, post offices, and military installations.

Gold Star Mother's & Family's Day - last Sunday in September (27th in 2026)

This day honors the mothers and families who have lost loved ones serving in the United States Armed Services. Military installations, veterans' organizations, and local communities typically host ceremonies, luncheons, and memorials to honor the fallen and support surviving families.

Veterans Day - November 11th

Originally Armistice Day, commemorating the end of WWI, the holiday was changed in 1954 to Veterans Day in order to recognize veterans of all conflicts. It is our opportunity to thank all the men and women who've served in the United States Armed Forces.

Loyalty Day - May 1st

Originally observed starting in 1921 as Americanization Day, it has since been adopted by the VFW and its Auxiliary to reaffirm patriotism, celebrate the heritage of American freedoms, and support democracy.

Memorial Day - last Monday in May (31st in 2027)

Our opportunity to remember and honor our nation's war dead.

Flag Day - June 14th

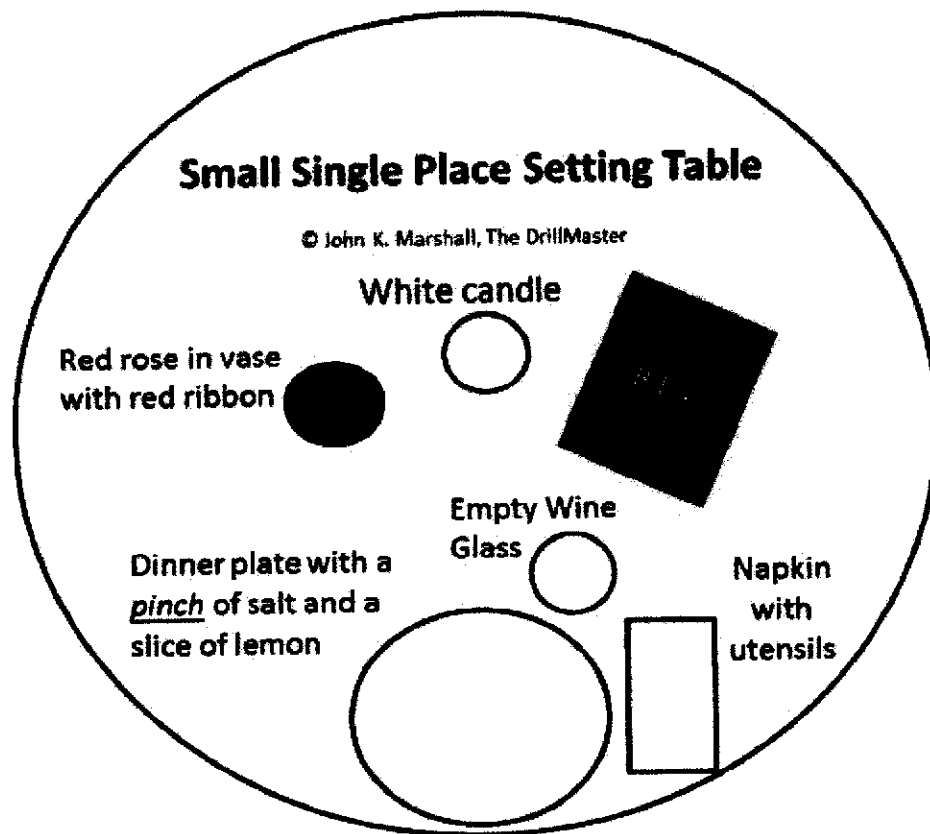
This day is to recognize and celebrate our nation's official symbol.

Independence Day - July 4th

Our nation's birthday commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

*For her special project, National President Donna K. Mills has teamed up with VFW Commander-in-Chief Cory L. Geisler for **Operation Bring Them Home**. It is about returning all of our heroes to their families and bringing them home with honor by partnering with the DPAA (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency). They work tirelessly around the globe to recover and repatriate service members who were Prisoners of War or Missing in Action.

Our POW/MIA Day observances and ceremonies will mean so much more this year considering our National President's special project. If your Auxiliary hasn't observed POW/MIA Day, or hasn't arranged a Missing Man Table in the past, please consider reaching out, and with the resources at hand, we can create a meaningful and respectful observance/display.



POW-MIA MISSING MAN TABLE



You may notice this small table here, in a place of honor. This table is our way of symbolizing that members of our Armed Forces are missing from our ranks. They are commonly called P.O.W.'s or M.I.A.'s, the VFW calls them comrades, and we call them heroes.

This table set for one is small... it symbolizes the frailty of one prisoner against his oppressors.

The tablecloth is white... it symbolizes the purity of their intentions to respond to their Country's call to arms.

The single red rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades in arms who keep faith awaiting their return.

The yellow ribbon tied on the vase is reminiscent of the yellow ribbon tied around trees and worn on the lapel of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting for our missing.

The candle... is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors and into the open arms of a grateful nation.

A slice of lemon is on the plate... to remind us of their bitter fate.

There is salt upon the plate... symbolic of the family's tears as they wait.

The glass is inverted... they cannot drink with us today.

The chair is empty... they are not here.

YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

AMERICANISM PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that creates the most unique POP sign and/or meme showcasing the VFW Auxiliary.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Americanism Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National Americanism Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Americanism Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the best promotion of POP signs and/or memes showcasing the VFW Auxiliary.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

AUXILIARY OF THE YEAR
Lisa Jackson, PDP, Chairman
51 Edward Road
Townsend, MA 01469
978-400-1658
hakjackson66@gmail.com

Committee: Sherry Grabon, PDP / Bette Jane Mire, PDP

Auxiliary of the Year is a title available to every auxiliary in Massachusetts. When people hear that title, some think it only belongs to the largest Auxiliaries or those with the most members and resources. That is not what makes an Auxiliary exceptional. What makes an Auxiliary of the Year is dedication, teamwork, and a shared commitment to serving veterans, military families, and our communities.

Every fundraiser, every hospital visit, every youth activity, every scholarship application, and every hour of volunteer service matters. These are not just activities to report – they are lives touched, needs met, and sacrifices honored.

Becoming an Auxiliary of the Year doesn't happen because of one leader. It happens when every member decides to contribute in whatever way they can. Some members volunteer at events. Others organize programs, recruit new members, make phone calls, write reports, or simply show up consistently to support the mission. Every contribution counts.

I encourage each of you to ask yourself: What more can I do this year? Can you participate in one more program? Invite a new member to join? Volunteer for a new project? Share your ideas and talents? Small efforts from many people create extraordinary results.

Most importantly, remember that our goal is not simply to earn an award. Our goal is to make a difference. If we focus on serving veterans and their families with passion, compassion, and commitment, recognition will follow naturally.

Let's challenge ourselves to set high standards, work together, support one another, and take pride in every accomplishment. Let us be known as an Auxiliary that leads through service, inspires others, and truly lives the values of the VFW Auxiliary.

The journey to becoming an Auxiliary of the Year begins with each member making a commitment today. Together, we can achieve great things. Please take time to review the points program on the following pages. There are changes made to the points every year that incorporate National awards. Work together to make a difference.

Thank you for your service, your dedication, and your belief in our mission. Let's make this our best year yet.

AUXILIARY OF THE YEAR

2026-2027

HIGHLIGHTED ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED BY NOVEMBER 30, 2026
Monetary Donations to any project must be a minimum of \$10.00 to earn credit.

NOTE: Two reports (one per period) shall be required covering the following periods:

4/01/26 – 11/30/26 This report must be received by the Department Chairmen by December 31, 2026, to be considered for the Mid-Winter Conference Contest.

12/01/26 – 3/31/2027 This report must be received by the Department Chairmen by April 15, 2027, to be considered for the Convention contests.

BLANK REPORTS WILL NOT BE AWARDED POINTS

OPERATIONS / ADMINISTRATION

CONVENTION FUND

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Donation of prize to the Pre-Convention Jamboree | 2 Points |
| 2. Purchase of Pre-Convention Jamboree raffle tickets | 3 Points |
| 3. Participation in additional Convention Fund special fundraiser | <u>3 Points</u> |
| | 8 Points |

FINANCE

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Annual Auxiliary Finance Donation by November 30, 2026 | 5 Points |
| (Donations received after November 30, 2026 – 2 Points) | |
| 2. Annual Auxiliary Finance Donation of \$50.00 or more | 5 Points |
| 3. Financial participation in finance projects throughout the year (to be prorated) | <u>25 Points</u> |
| | 35 Points |

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Member(s) attendance at the Program Kickoff | 3 Points |
| 2. Member(s) attendance at majority of District meetings | 2 Points |
| 3. Member(s) attendance at Department Mid-Winter Conference | 2 Points |
| 4. Donation to State President's Special Project | 3 Points |
| 5a. Four (4) quarterly audits to Dept. Treasurer ON TIME - end of Aug., Nov., | 2 Points |
| b. and end of Feb. and May (one point for each report) | 2 Points |
| 6. Purchase of State President's pins/coins | 2 Points |
| 7. Purchase of 25 or more State President's pins/coins | 5 Points |
| 8. Purchase of Treasurer's Bond paid by 7/31/26 | <u>2 Points</u> |
| | 23 Points |

NATIONAL PROGRAMS

AMERICANISM

1. Promote, participate in, recognize any patriotic day or branch of service birthdays 2 Points
 2. American and/or POW/MIA flag presentation (must be at least 2" x 3") 2 Points
 3. Create a POP sign (Point-of-Purchase display) incorporating American symbols to promote Patriotism 1 Point
 4. Issue Patriotic Appreciation Citations, Certificate of Appreciation or Respect for the Flag Citations to businesses/citizens displaying U.S. or POW/MIA flag or other displays of American pride 1 Point
 5. Conduct patriotic instruction in your Auxiliary and/or community 1 Point
 6. Participate in a Loyalty Day program between 4/1/26 to 3/31/27 1 Point
 - 7a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 1 Point
 - b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 1 Point
- 10 Points**

BUDDY POPPY

1. Hold a Buddy Poppy drive with or without your Post 2 Points
 2. Participate in the Department Program Kickoff display contest 1 Point
 3. Participate in the Mid-Winter Conference display contest 1 Point
 - (4. Participate in the State Convention Display Contest 2027 – 2 Points)*
(This will count towards the 2027-28 Aux. of the Year Contest)
 5. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 1 Point
 6. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 1 Point
- 6 Points**

CHIEF OF STAFF/EXTENSION/REVITALIZATION

1. Present "Good Job" awards to mentors in your Auxiliary 2 Points
 2. Hold a special recognition for mentors in your auxiliary 2 Points
 - 3a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 1 Point
 - b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 1 Point
- 6 Points**

HISTORIAN / MEDIA RELATIONS

1. Communicate quarterly to all members by email, text or phone call 2 Points
 2. Have and use a Facebook page and/or Website (alone or with Post) 1 Point
 3. Hold a "how to" training to educate members on use of media 1 Point
 - 4a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/25 1 Point
 - b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/26 1 Point
- 6 Points**

HOSPITAL

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Member(s) attendance at the Hospital Workshop | 3 Points |
| 2. Donation to Department Hospital Fund (Hospital Pledge) | 2 Points |
| 3. Donation of \$50.00 or more to Department Hospital Fund (Hospital Pledge) | 5 Points |
| 4. Sponsor a party/function for any facility, both VA and non-VA | 2 Points |
| 5. Donate items to a medical center/soldiers home/community hospital or nursing home | 2 Points |
| 6. Volunteer at any VA and/or non-VA medical facility | 2 Points |
| 7. Promote/recruit volunteers for VA (CDCE) or non-VA facility | 2 Point |
| 8a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 | 1 Point |
| b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 | <u>1 Point</u> |
| | 20 Points |

LEGISLATIVE

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Subscribe to VFW's <i>Action Corps Weekly</i> | 2 Points |
| 2. Promote, participate or host activities regarding VFW Priority Goals | 1 Point |
| 3. Contact legislators on veterans issues by any means
(emails, phone, letters, in person, etc.) | 2 Points |
| 4a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 | 1 Point |
| b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 | <u>1 Point</u> |
| | 7 Points |

MEMBERSHIP (recorded at National Headquarters by dates listed)

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. 80% plus by September 30, 2026 | 12 Points |
| 2. 95%+ by November 30, 2026 | 12 Points |
| 3. 98%+ by February 28, 2027 | 12 Points |
| 4. 100%+ by April 30, 2027 | 7 Points |
| 5. 102%+ by May 15, 2027 | 5 Points |
| 6. Promote, participate or host activities on Auxiliary education and recruitment or
educate members on National Membership Program Awards | 1 Point |
| 7. Participate in recruiting event on any level | 1 Point |
| 8. Recruit at least one new or rejoin member
(1 member = 1 point; 2 members = 2 points; 3 members = 3 points; over 3 = 4 points) | up to - 4 Points |
| 9a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 | 1 Point |
| b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 | <u>1 Point</u> |
| | 56 Points |

SCHOLARSHIPS

1. Promote the National Continuing Education Scholarship Contest 1 Point
 2. Promote / Participate in the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest 2 Points
 3. Promote / Participate in the 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest 2 Points
 4. Assist Post by Promoting or Conducting the Patriot's Pen Essay Contest 2 Points
 5. Assist Post by Promoting or Conducting the Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Contest 2 Points
 6. Recognize contest winners by hosting an Awards Ceremony and/or presenting awards 1 Point
 7. Donate to the Continuing Education Scholarship Fund through National 1 Point
 8. Donate to the Patriotic Art Scholarship Fund (for both art contests) through National 2 Points
 9. Donate to the Bessie Hanken Youth Awards Fund (through Department office) 2 Points
- Note: This fund covers the prize money for **all youth contests**.*
10. Donation of \$50.00 or more to Bessie Hanken Youth Awards Fund 5 Points
 - 11a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 1 Point
 - b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 1 Point
- 22 Points**

VETERANS AND FAMILY SUPPORT

1. Promote, participate or host any VFW Program listed:
 - a. Disaster Relief
 - b. Help-a-Hero Scholarship
 - c. National Veterans Service (NVS)
 - d. Unmet Needs
 - e. Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness
 - f. Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA)1 Point
 2. Donate to any VFW Program listed:
 - a. Disaster Relief
 - b. Help-a-Hero Scholarship
 - c. National Veterans Service (NVS)
 - d. Unmet Needs
 - e. DPAA2 Points
 3. Participate in Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness 1 Point
 4. Provide direct aid to veterans, service members and/or their families 2 Points
 5. Participate in Wreaths Across America project 2 Points
 6. Sponsor/donate to Veterans Voices Writing Project 1 Point
 7. Participate in annual Baby Showers held at VA Medical Centers 1 Point
 - 8a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 1 Point
 - b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 1 Point
- 12 Points**

VFW NATIONAL HOME

1. Promote the VFW National Home 2 Points
 2. Promote the VFW National Home's Helpline 1 Point
 3. Purchase at least one National Home Life Membership or Tribute Brick 1 Point
 4. Donate to Health & Happiness/Christmas Cheer Fund through MALTA 2 Points
 5. Donate to Massachusetts House through Department 2 Points
 6. Donate to an additional National Home fundraiser 2 Points
 - 7a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 1 Point
 - b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 1 Point
- 12 Points**

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Work with youth/youth groups during program year | 1 Point |
| 2. Award Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations | 2 Points |
| 3. Participate in Patriotism through Literacy by creating a VFW Auxiliary Lending Library | 2 Points |
| 4. Participate in Patriotism through Literacy | 2 Points |
| 5. Host an Awards Ceremony recognizing your Illustrating America contest winners | 1 Point |
| 6. Promote the Illustrating America art contest | 2 Points |
| 7a. Submit required ½ year report by 12/31/26 | 1 Point |
| 7b. Submit required year-end report by 4/15/27 | 1 Point |
| | <u>12 Points</u> |

TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION **235 Points**

EXTRA CREDIT: Each VFW Auxiliary shall earn 15 ***additional points*** in the Awards Program by submitting the Auxiliary of the Year Report Form outlining only **ONE PROJECT (big or small) ASSISTING VETERAN(S), THEIR FAMILIES OR YOUR COMMUNITY** during this Administration. All your projects are worthwhile, but please just choose ONE to report here. **15 POINTS**

TOTAL AUXILIARY OF THE YEAR AWARDS POINTS AVAILABLE **250 POINTS**

NOTE: As you have the potential of 250 points, you will need at least 150 points to qualify for the \$10.00 awards and 175 points to qualify for the Auxiliary of the Year awards.

In addition for all awards (individual programs or Auxiliary of the Year), the Auxiliary must:

- have held at least 10 meetings this year**
- not be on suspension**
- not be in arrears with National or Department**
- be up to date with audit reports**
- have officers elected, installed and recorded in MALTA for the coming year**
- have Department Convention registration fees paid in full**

BY MAY 20, 2027 DEADLINE

BUDDY POPPY
Cathy Churchill, Chairman
43 Marvin Road
Melrose, MA 02176
718-943-0276
cathy.churchill@yahoo.com

As we kick off the new Auxiliary Program year, I thought I would remind you all of some of the history of the Buddy Poppy.

Following the end of World War 1, a woman from France, Anna Guerin, using the poem "In Flanders Field" as inspiration, began making silk poppy pins to help raise money to aid the widows and orphans of France that the war had left behind in its wake. She also used the proceeds to help rebuild French communities destroyed during the war.

In 1922, Anna Guerin brought the idea to the VFW to sell these poppy pins to help support the veterans of WW1 in America. The following year, the VFW decided to have the Buddy Poppy made by Disabled Veterans and Veterans in need in order to provide them with financial assistance through these jobs. In 1924, the VFW registered the name "Buddy" (in association with artificial flowers) with the US Patent Office, thereby guaranteeing only the official VFW Buddy Poppy can carry this name.

The Buddy Poppy consists of three main parts, the Petal which is one piece that looks like it has 7 petals, the Stem which has a green bead ball and a stem, and the flag which on one side has the VFW insignia with information on how the proceeds are used and on the other side it shows the saying "BUDDY POPPY WEAR IT PROUDLY."

Following the 2020 pandemic, the VFW realized they needed to find another way to make the Buddy Poppy, so they turned to Cottonwood, Inc., who are the exclusive makers of the cargo straps used by the Department of Defense in transporting supplies to our military. Cottonwood employs individuals with developmental disabilities, many of whom have Veterans within their family, which is why the VFW felt they would be a perfect fit to produce the Buddy Poppy.

While Memorial Day weekend is always a good time to remind people of the sacrifices our military make to keep us safe, you can always hold a Buddy Poppy Drive any time of the year.

One last piece of Buddy Poppy history - in 1950, Doris Day was named the Buddy Poppy Leading Lady. Her likeness was used on promotional posters across the country.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer, and remember to get your Buddy Poppy Displays done!

Official National VFW "Buddy"® Poppy Display Contest, Unofficial "Buddy"® Poppy Display Contest & VFW National "Buddy"® Poppy Awards



VFW "Buddy"® Poppy Display Contest

This is an official VFW National contest. The VFW National "Buddy"® Poppy Display Contest takes place annually at National Convention. Displays are judged in three (3) categories.

Category 1. Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign

Category 2. Memorial or Inspirational Displays

Category 3. Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies

Unofficial "Buddy"® Poppy Display Contest

If your Department decides to hold an unofficial "Buddy"® Poppy Display Contest, please ensure that all participants and judges understand the rules and guidelines. The winners of an unofficial contest will **not** be forwarded to VFW National for judging.

VFW National "Buddy"® Poppy Awards Each year, VFW National awards Department Commanders, Department "Buddy"® Poppy Chairpersons and Post Commanders and their respective Auxiliary counterparts. The contests are as follows:

- **Over One Million "Buddy"® Poppy Club**
Recipients: Department Commander & Auxiliary President.
- **Divisional Contest**
Recipients: Department Commander & Auxiliary President.
- **Outstanding Department Chairperson Award**
Recipients: Department "Buddy"® Poppy Chairperson and their Auxiliary counterpart.
- **Outstanding Post Commander & Auxiliary President's Award**
Recipients: Post Commander & Auxiliary President.

Contest rules and criteria can be found in the **VFW National "Buddy"® Poppy Chairperson Guide** found in MALTA Member Resources. Contact your Post for entry forms.

If you have further questions regarding the contests and awards, please contact:

Lynn W. Rolf III
VFW Programs Director
LRolf@vfw.org

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT
“BUDDY”® POPPY PROGRAM**

NATIONAL CONVENTION “BUDDY”® POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST

These guidelines have been designed to place emphasis on the purpose and effectiveness of the displays. It is recommended that Department (State) contests rule be established in a like form.

RULES

- (1) Displays will be presented and judged in three categories:

CATEGORY 1. **Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign** (Window, booth, parade, poster displays, campaign promotions, etc.)

- (a) Displays must be designed for public exposure and must bear a message soliciting a donation for and wearing of the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.
- (b) At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in its original form and color, with a label attached.

CATEGORY 2. **Memorial or Inspirational Displays** (Wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes)

- (a) Displays must be designed to honor the dead, to inspire devotion to God and Country, or to dramatize the activities supported by the Buddy Poppy.
- (b) At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in its original form and color, with a label attached.

CATEGORY 3. **Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies** (Post Home displays, table center-pieces, corsages, pictures, plaques, models, scenes, hats, novelty pieces, etc.)

- (a) Any display not meeting the qualifications for Categories 1 or 2 shall automatically be entered in Category 3.
- (b) At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in its original form and color, with a label attached.

- (2) Buddy Poppy display entries must be constructed using Buddy Poppies purchased through the VFW Store. Authorized styles include the legacy and tin tab poppies.
- (3) Departments are authorized one per category. The only displays that will be judged will be the displays provided on a list by Department to National Headquarters Programs office by 1 July 2026 with their completed entry form. Any displays brought to convention that are not on the list will not be judged.

- (4) The National Programs Staff will have no responsibility in setting up, taking down or returning displays. Power will only be provided for displays that have provided prior notice for need by 1 July 2026.
- (5) Displays shall be set up in space provided in the convention facility. Prior to setting up the display, the responsible person must check in with the Buddy Poppy desk and verify contact information on their entry form. **(Please be advised, all displays must be removed by noon on Tuesday, July 28th, or it will be disposed of by convention center personnel.)**
- (6) Displays may or may not be accompanied by a white card, not to exceed 4 inches by 6 inches in size, on which an explanation of the theme for the display or other information of interest to the viewers or the judges, should be written in black ink.
- (7) Post name, number, city or state (including the shape of your state) may **not** be visible on the displays. Failure to comply will result in disqualification.
- (8) NOTE: Any use of non-VFW trademarks or copyrighted material on your display must have prior approval from the trademark or copyright holder. These include, but are not limited to, names, logos, audio/visual graphics, images and/or props. The VFW and Buddy Poppy logo and name is authorized but use of any outside organization trademark or copyrighted material and/or logos must have prior approval through their respective organization.

JUDGING

Judging of displays will be based on effectiveness, purpose, clarity of theme, suitability, originality, beauty and number of poppies used. Where a sample of a large number of identical items (such as corsages or wreaths) is entered, full credit shall be given for the total number of poppies used. Judging will be completed Monday evening and the winning displays will have the appropriate ribbons placed on the display on Tuesday morning.

PRIZES

Awards to the first, second, and third place winners in each of the three categories will be mailed to the winning Department's Adjutant after convention.

NOTE

The Department Adjutant will notify the Programs office via email at mspencer@vfw.org, in writing, by **July 1, 2025** of the Posts/ Auxiliaries that will represent the Department in each category. This will allow us the time necessary to ensure each entry has sufficient space to set up at the National Convention.

Please be advised, the Programs Staff cannot guarantee against theft of personal items placed on displays. The exhibit hall is secured at night and monitored by security guards; however, they monitor a large area and are not assigned to one specific area. We strongly discourage using items of sentimental value, items of value or items considered to be irreplaceable on Buddy Poppy displays.

Thank you and good luck!

(Revised 5/8/26)

CHIEF OF STAFF
JERI RUMSIS

As we embark on a new year, it is important that we acknowledge working together as a Team for our Veterans, we will accomplish so much more.

It is up to each of us to maintain the health of our Auxiliaries, our relationships with our Post, and 'Unaffiliated Posts.'

That is the correct verbiage. We no longer use the Bachelor Post term of many years ago.

The reason that it changed is that there are many women in the VFW, thus bachelor was no longer a good description of a post without an auxiliary. So please continue to contact those Unaffiliated Post and request time to share the benefits of having an Auxiliary.

ARE YOU DISTRICT DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF? You are my important extension!

I will be counting on your insight and knowledge as you work with your District President, and the Auxiliaries in your District. Please reach out to me with your concerns or questions.

It is up to you! Recruitment is Vital.

Your words and actions play a huge part in the way our Organization is perceived. How do you speak to others about our Auxiliary? How do you speak to your Auxiliary Brothers & Sisters? How do you speak to, and treat potential members? *How you present yourself and your behavior reflects on all of us. Be kind, always!*

Reach out and include new members. *Teach them about our Programs, share your experience, and guide them.* Always point them towards the Malta databank as their best resource. (and yours!)

Need to revitalize your Auxiliary? Reach out if you need help. If there are issues, or problems, let's nip it in the bud. Reach out to me with your concerns as soon as you see them. Sometimes another ear or set of eyes can make a difference, or someone else interceding works. I'm more than happy to help. Yellow Flags are better than Red Flags !

Jrumsis@gmail.com Tel. 508-451-3606

One note ~ BULLYING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED ANYWHERE.



Healthy Auxiliary Checklist Auxiliary To-Dos and Deadlines

What Your Auxiliary Needs to Do:

Election of Officers, and Delegates and Alternates.

Installation Report forwarded to Department and National Headquarters.

Bond Application submitted for offices of President and Treasurer bonded with an indemnity company authorized by National Headquarters or the Department.

Last quarterly audit and membership status of the VFW Auxiliary given to the Post Commander.

District Dues - Based on June 30 membership of prior year.
(If applicable.)

Audit Reports

Period 1/1 - 3/31 completed by 4/30
Period 4/1 - 6/30 completed by 7/31
Period 7/1 - 9/30 completed by 10/31
Period 10/1-12/31 completed by 1/31

Project, promotion and/or donation in National Programs.
See the National Program Book for goals, awards and more information.

Minimum of ten members paid in order to maintain charter.

Hold at least ten business meetings per year.

Deadline:

- April 30
- June 30
- August 31
- Within 30 days of assuming the office of President
- September 30
- Approved Audit to Department Treasurer
Period 1/1 - 3/31 due by 5/31
Period 4/1 - 6/30 due by 8/31
Period 7/1 - 9/30 due by 11/30
Period 10/1-12/31 due by 2/28
- See the National Program Book and your Department Program Book for deadlines.
- February 1 of the current year
- Between July 1 and June 30



Health Checkup for Your Auxiliary Member Questionnaire

1. Why are you a member of the VFW Auxiliary? _____

2. Do you volunteer for, or offer financial support to, any of the National Programs:?

YES **NO** (circle one)

3. If you answered "YES", to question #2, what do you do and why? _____

4. If you answered "NO" to question #2, please share the reason why. _____

5. Do you feel our National Programs benefit our local veterans, their families and our own members?

YES **NO** (circle one)

6. If you answered "YES", to question #5, what do you do and why? _____

7. If you answered "NO" to question #5, please share the reason why. _____

8. Are there activities you would like to see in this Auxiliary? _____

9. Is the monthly business meeting conducted at a time that is suitable for you?

YES **NO** (circle one)

If not, what time would you like to see the meeting scheduled? _____

10. Is the monthly meeting length appropriate for the business conducted?

YES **NO** (circle one)

11. Do you have ideas on how to increase meeting attendance? _____

12. What do you feel would bring new members into our organization? _____

13. Where do you see the VFW Auxiliary ten years from now? Will you still be a part of it? _____

EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION AWARDS

Awards for Members:

1. Citation to one member in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best assistance to the Chief of Staff in establishing a new VFW Auxiliary with the approval of the VFW Auxiliary Department President.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff must sign and send a copy of the completed Department nomination form to the VFW Auxiliary National Chief of Staff by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliary members from National Headquarters after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for District Presidents:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary District President or Official Representative in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best assistance to the VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff with a struggling VFW Auxiliary by mentoring and maintaining a close relationship until the VFW Auxiliary becomes healthy, with the approval of the VFW Auxiliary Department President. Use of MALTA Healthy Auxiliary tools and mentor training is required.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff must sign and send a copy of the completed Department nomination form to the VFW Auxiliary National Chief of Staff by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winners from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary District President or official representative.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most unique promotion educating members about how to maintain healthy VFW Auxiliaries and to promote Extension while utilizing MALTA Member Resources.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

CONVENTION FUND
Patricia Paul, PDP
18 Duffy Street
Chicopee, MA 01020
413-427-3006
Tpaul49@aol.com

Co-Chairman Theresa Horwitz

I am Patricia Paul, Convention Fund Chairman for the 2026-2027 year. My Co-Chairman is Teresa Horwitz. The funds we raise this year will be used to finance the 2028 Department Convention.

My sincerest thank you to all who purchase items at the sales tables and buy raffle tickets for our raffles.

If anyone has any ideas what might be a good seller on our tables, please let me know. It is hard to find items that people want to purchase, so all ideas are welcomed. If anyone would like to contribute craft items or anything else, we will gladly accept them.

Save the date!! March 13, 2027, is the date of our Pre-Convention Jamboree to be held at the Wood-Frascotti VFW Post 5594 in Upton. We will be seeking prize donations in the near future.

We are looking forward to a great year. Thank you for your continued generosity and kindness.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION
Kathleen Clement. PDP, Chairman
93 Church St.
Fairhaven, MA 02719
508-997-7214
kclement1@comcast.net

Melissa Danforth, Co-Chairman

As the Department Convention Chairman this year, I will have the pleasure of working with the Department VFW and the Department Auxiliary to make your attending the 102nd Annual State Convention in June a memorable one. I know how hard you will be working this year to promote our national and department programs, along with the many local community projects you plan to complete. The Department Convention should be a time to celebrate your accomplishments of the year.

This year's Department Convention activities will be held from June 3-June 6, 2027, again at the Sheraton in Springfield. The final council of administration meeting of the 2026-2027 year will be held on Thursday, June 3, followed by the convention sessions starting Friday, June 4, 2027.

The highlight of the convention occurs during the regular sessions. Each department chairman will announce the winning auxiliaries in each division for their excellence. The presentation of auxiliary presidents recognizes their commitment and is followed by the awards for Auxiliaries of the Year in each division. With your dedication, your auxiliary can be among the winners in June.

As plans are finalized, your auxiliary will be notified through the department mailings with a schedule of events. This past year's convention had members attending many activities planned right in the hotel, while others were able to venture outside the hotel shopping, dining, or trying their luck at the casino.

The ***State President's Theme of: Stability, Strength, Hope*** should guide us throughout the year. Hopefully, you will make a difference in your auxiliary and district by keeping your auxiliary healthy and *stable*. Your *strength* will bring *hope* to the great possibilities for our organization in the future.

Thank you, Madam President Pat, for this appointment. I know it will be both enjoyable and challenging and Melissa and I are looking forward to your year as Department President and serving you in this capacity.

DISTRICT PRESIDENTS' CONFERENCE

(Juliette Mason, PDP, Chairman)

This year 2026 - 2027 the District Presidents will have 3 challenges and to accomplish them you will need ALL your Auxiliaries to help.

Not only will you be visiting every Auxiliary in your District along with holding your District meetings, you will also be working to be VIP District President of the Year, which will be awarded at the Mid-Winter Conference. The third challenge will be to achieve the DISTRICT PRESIDENTS' CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE, which will be awarded at our State Convention.

Over the past few years the State Presidents worked to achieve the CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE awarded at the National Convention. Seeing that our State President Pat will be working hard to achieve this and that the work done by our Department and the District Presidents is a major part of the goal, I feel the District Presidents deserved this same award.

It will take ALL of US to achieve this goal. Not only do we need the District Presidents, but we need ALL our members too. So as you visit your Auxiliaries this year be sure to let them know you are there to help them and the Department officers are there to help you.

Remember with every achievement and goal reached we are working and helping our Veterans and Their Families.

I will always be available to help but I can only do that if you let me know. You can contact me at:

Juliette Mason, PDP
District Presidents' Chairman
PO Box 1222
Southwick, MA 01077

call or text (413) 240-5186
email jules14beal42@gmail.com

VIP District Presidents

Those District Presidents who meet the following criteria will be presented a special gift at the Mid-Winter Conference that they can wear for the balance of the year. This is the first of two contests during the year. The **DEADLINE** for this contest is **DECEMBER 31, 2026**.

With the exception of the ***Traveling Membership Trophy***, NO awards will be given to District Presidents by the State Chairmen during the year.

To be a VIP District President:

The DISTRICT PRESIDENT must have:

Made report of status of District to the District VFW Commander by July 31, 2026

Assured that the District bond is renewed by August 31, 2026

Submitted to the State President:

The District Meeting Schedule for 2026-2027

The schedule of inspections of the Auxiliaries in your District

Request for approval of someone to inspect your Home Auxiliary

Attended ALL District Presidents' Conferences

Attended ALL Council of Administration Meetings

Attended the Program Kick Off

Attended the Hospital Workshop

Submitted the completed inspection reports of the Auxiliaries to the State President

Within 7 days

In addition, the DISTRICT must have:

Submitted the minutes of the District Meetings held

To include the details on the School of Instruction

To include ATTENDANCE sheets

To include the audit

AND 80% of the DISTRICT AUXILIARIES must have made the following Financial Contributions/Program Donations:

Department Finance Donation

Veteran & Military Support

National Military Services Fund

Health & Happiness Fund

Bessie Hanken Scholarship Fund

Hospital Pledge

ALSO MEMBERSHIP must have reached the following goals:

50% retention of annual members by October 31, 2026

95% total membership by November 30, 2026

FINANCE
Paul La Porte, Chairman
P O Box 13
E. Bridgewater, MA 2333

Welcome to the 2026-2027 Auxiliary year!

Finance is one of the most important chairmanships of our wonderful organization. It would be very difficult to operate without any financial resources.

The familiar gift and 50/50 raffles will be held at every meeting and functions throughout the year. In addition, there will be special raffles of baskets at the Program Kickoff, Mid-Winter Conference and Department Convention. At other events, there will be the Money Raffle, Scratch & Win, Convention Room Raffle, Gift Cards, etc., which we hope you will continue to support as I strive to make the budget figure for fundraisers.

I am planning to hold the Spaghetti Dinner and Auction in December, once again, as this is always a very successful, enjoyable event. Watch the Department mailings for information on all the fundraisers being planned throughout the year.

Also, please don't forget the annual Auxiliary finance donation requested – extra points for contributions of \$50 or more.

Department Officers, Chairmen, District Presidents, Past Department Presidents, CDCE and Hospital Reps – we will be grateful for any help fulfilling the Department Composition Finance Donations.

It's always difficult to speak of raising funds and seeking donations, but with your help, I'm sure we will succeed once again. Thank you for any and all your help. Donations of prizes is always appreciated, too.

I would be remiss if I neglected to thank all my sisters and brothers for the cards, prayers, visits, phone calls as I am recuperating from my illness. I hope to see you all in the very near future.